

THE AMBER VALLEY
WARWICK CHIPMAN

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Samuel Thompson

THE
AMBER
VALLEY



THE AMBER VALLEY

POEMS BY
WARWICK
CHIPMAN

TORONTO

S. B. GUNDY



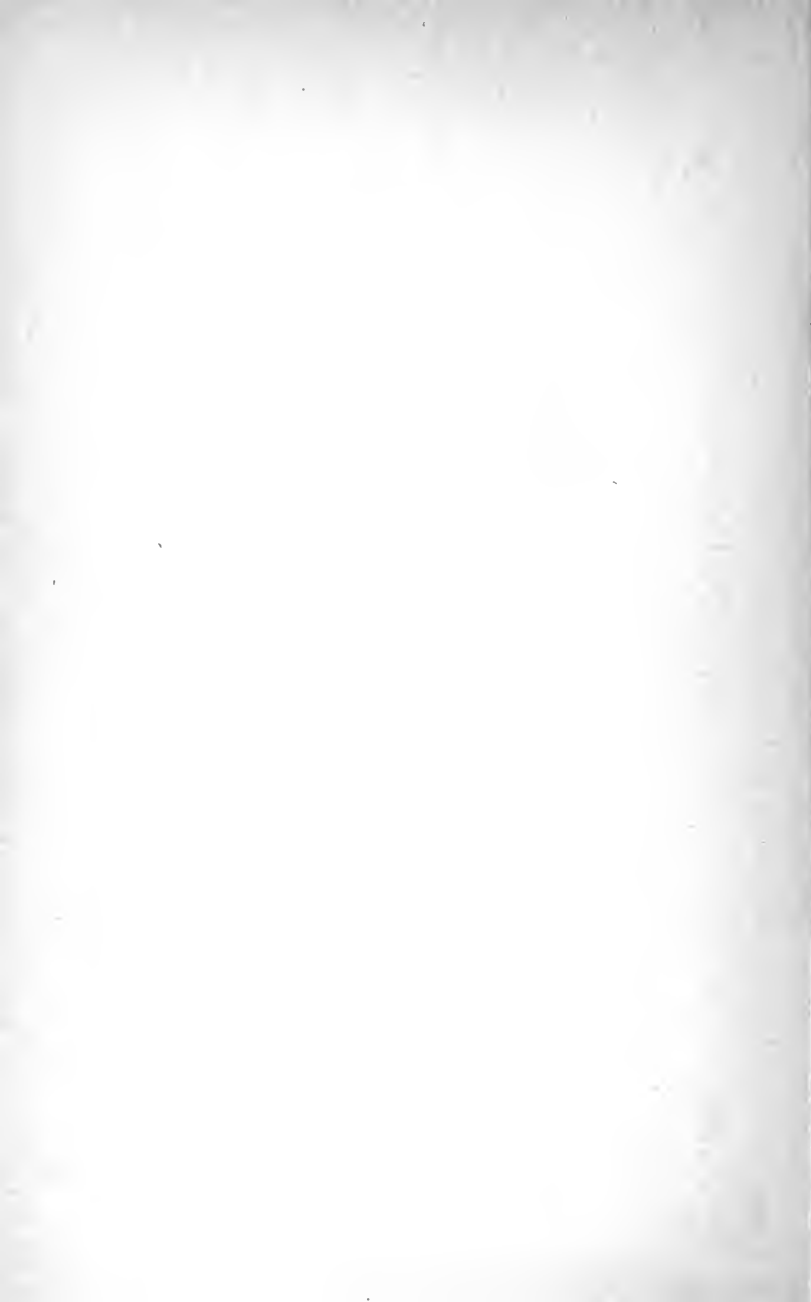
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THE AMBER VALLEY



THE AMBER VALLEY

BIRD of the sun, appeasing drop by drop

From the day's brim thy lonely spirit's
thirst

With tremulous lilts that falter at the top

Of soberness, to riot in a burst

Past measuring immersed

Of passionate precipitous ecstasy—

Joy of the world, why art thou so dispersed

When men importune thee

To make thy rapture theirs, as questionless
and free ?

Lo, the strange hurt that when I come to steep

My spirit in the sunset, I have had

Such sympathies with impulse more to weep
Than to be lightened ; mighty truth forbad
My blindness to be glad
And round my narrow contemplation set
Meanings whose very vastnesses were sad,
Being so secret, yet
Too natural to escape, too lovely to forget !

Imperishable glammers, ye are part
Of more than light can fathom, agitate
So wild a music in the unused heart,
Such bright suggestions, that will never wait
Till the first wince abate,
O all you cloudy transports of the sun,
Your instant is for nature's self too great !
A master-tale begun,
Too potent for the teller, and so withheld,
undone !

Ye hill-sides, in one moment have I felt

All man's deep heart-ache in your faintest
tone.

Ye hint his fullness :—Oh, then, ye can melt

His cloven spirit to be less alone !

For you and he have grown

Together in a self more real than ye ;

And what ye keep not is yet more your own

Than what ye keep and see—

The royal voyager that taunts you to be free.

Ye tell to-morrow, and to-morrow's morrow

The Destiny whereunto all things rise,

Whose glories round our littleness give sorrow,

Haunts all your lonely palace of surmise.

It broods where beauty lies ;

It comprehends all rapture in its rest ;

The pang of amber valleys and far skies
Low gleaming in the West
Is but that pulse, O world, awaking in thy
breast.

All passing splendours ; joys half understood,
And lost while looked at ; hidden things
that wake

Indefinable answers in the wood ;
Song flurries from the wrens that seem to
make

More than the spirit ache :
Be sorrowful, be dumb, be fugitive !
We follow where you can no more forsake.

O yet again we give
Your life to you, who go to where we chiefly
live !

Bird of the Sun, in all the lavish wont

That makes thy passion sad as insecure,

Our inmost spirit, toiling to confront

Its utmost, is for one cool moment sure.

Therefore thy songs endure ;

Therefore do thy dim hills outlive their green.

And, oh, the transience that no time can cure

Eternity serene

Draws to the magic isles, till her whole heart
be seen !

THE HAWK

UP he leaps from the cedarn deeps

Of the rock of the mossy mould,

His heart is one with the heart of the sun,

But his eye is clear and cold.

The dark hills take from the brake and the lake

The running mist and the dew,

But vainly they cover each feathered lover,

His eye can still pierce through.

And the farthest bourne of the blinking morn

He reads like a spirit of light,

As over the miles of the hills and the isles

He launches into the height.

And now he swings upon iron wings,

And now like a golden bar

Back on the crest of the wind of the West

He sweeps, and hangs like a star :—

Lord of the sword that he warred on, Lord

Of the air and the sky his throne,

The force of the blast is his at last,

And the heaven is his alone.

His delight is the scorn of might,

And the might of scorn his pleasure.

He hath a call for the hearts of all—

A silent, mystic measure,

The soul of a song that pulls along

Each rhyming soul to his ken ;

They awake, they assemble ; the branches
tremble,

He waits and they tremble again.

Ah frail and fair ! from his vassal air

To where thy homage is

With a laugh in his heart, like a breath, like a dart,

O tremulous one, thou art his !

TO A LOON

MYSTERIOUS Bird, thy fathers found
No terrors in the watery round
Of vastness where thy pines abound.

And thou, O prince of pioneers,
How many glorious summered years
Hast thou seen nothing but thy peers !

Thou and the sun of thy desire,
O thou with song and he with fire
Do halve the north in proud empire.

From lake through opening lake afar
To where thy quivering echoes are
Thou goest as simply as a star.

Again, again thy wild-flying trills
Thy spirit follows, and throbs and thrills
Bodiless in a war of hills.

And then,—ah then in the wilderness
Down droppest thou to what distress !
So echoed and so answerless !

What pain, that, sieging all the ken
Of nature, pierced beside thee then
Me also of the sons of men.

I too have come, dear bird, and me,
Me too the northern ecstasy
Has filled as that proud flame filled thee ;

The very core and quick at last
Of the world's heart has almost passed
To utterance, and the summons vast

I too have followed, swept away
By more than ever fed the ray
Of poignant eve and mortal day.

A triumph, a delight, a throne !
A voice ! an answer strangely known !
The world's whole secret and my own !

And then,—ah then in the wild quake
Of that swift joy, a moment brake
All but its memory and its ache !

A moment and a faltering light,
And sureness of how vast a night
Enfolds our startled gleams of sight !

How little in ourselves we keep !
How lonely are our souls, how deep
Immersed in the blind waste of sleep !

How nature in her quiet eves
Withdraws her glory from the leaves
And all unto herself receives !

All, save upon a hill afar
One hemlock pointing to a star !
And it, and I, how dark we are !

THE EARTH TO SKOBELEFF

THEE, my warrior, oh, for thee

Beats my heart, my pride, my passion !

Never shook the Indian Sea

At such monstrous Empiry

As thy will can fashion.

Lo the Princedoms of the North

At their age-long feast supine !

Come, thou God-like vandal, forth !

Fill their cups with blood for wine !

Make a dunghill of their boast !

Then, an Eastward Attila,

March thy devastating host

O'er the Sultan, past the Shah !

Oh, the hot intoxication !

All things new, and young, and whole !

I, thine earth, in every nation,

Find my master in thy Soul !

I, heartsick of wandering free,

Soon can shake my tresses down,

Bare my breast to welcome thee,

Laugh and weep at thy renown !

Only, only—

Ah, dear Lord, the world is lonely,

Lo, what sudden fever then

Nigh betrayed thee, mother of men !

Past thy brinks a poignant gleam

Steals upon the apostate sense

And blights that wild magnificence.

Who is he to sit supreme ?

Turn thee, turn ; O leave him there

Tall and terrible and fair,

With the blue cold eyes that kill.

Let his fearful beauty spill.

Dig, O earth, his wondering grave.

Strike, and as thou strikest, save !

Be to his wanton music deaf.

And—in the midnight, wine for blood

And thine own lust shall choke thy flood

And spoil thy tempest, Skobelev !

THE SOUTH WIND

WHEN the South wind brings the smell of the
grass,

And new-born daisies nod in June,

And humming birds to the roses pass,

And gnats in the shadows dance in tune ;

And ruffled birches drowsily wake,

Roaring softly, murmuring loud,

And a spirit born of the dappled lake

Rims the sun with a filmy shroud ;

O then the listening heart receives

A touch, a whisper half-expressed !

And the love that was once so close to the leaves

Lifts and flowers again in the breast.

O then the memored soul falls free

Of pride that lords it over the day !

For earth hath a subtler mystery

Than ever words can wither away.

Earth and time and all things fair,

Equally only a moment old,

If they wake in the heart can they die from
there ?

Ah, there are deeper things to be told !

The days of magic are never over,

The under voices yet are heard,

When the South Wind brings the smell of the
clover

And noon cries hush to the song of the bird.

WASSAIL

THE North, and O the North !—the mart

Of ruddy hopes and glory !

Ah, Child of Oceans, where thou art

The urging feet, the surging heart,

They are not transitory.

And sigh no longer for the South

And the scents that warm and woo her :

For O, the apples in her mouth—

The golden apples, the languid drouth—

Have lost her winning to her.

But fill me with the North—the shout

Of Wills, the huge endeavour !

O worthiness to sing about !

Thy Seed shall like a wind ride out

To Force, for ever and ever !

NAPLES

A TERRACE in Naples,
A pause in the hill,
An olive tree dappling
The gleam of the sill.
And higher, the stairways,
The roses, the vine ;
And there against heaven
Were you by the line.

It was pleasure for you,
It was pleasure for me ;
For the eyes were full,
But the hearts were free.
But had it been love
Little pleasure there'd be !

There was light in the hands

That were pinning the sheet ;

There was life in the breast,

There was joy in the feet.

A flash in the eyes

Then—nothing but this—

You sent me a laugh

And I sent you a kiss.

'Twas a look and a laugh,

And a toss of the hand ;

And then on the morrow

Away from the land.

And nothing was opened

And nothing was bruised,

And nothing desired,

And nothing refused.

It was pleasure for you,

It was pleasure for me ;

For the eyes were full,

But the hearts were free ;

But had it been love,

Ah, had it been love

Little pleasure there'd be !

THE SONGS UNSUNG

COME for a song that shall not hold

One breath of love, one word !

Love that grows like winter cold,

Ah, let him not be heard !

Sing of the joys that leave no sting ;

That never felt the smart

Of all the songs you do not sing

Abiding in your heart !

THE MOON-PATH

MOON over the waters,
Mother of pillared air,
Oft did my childhood
To thy path repair
And ponder with thee there.

Ah, that after learning
The poor loves of men
There is no returning
To rise with thee again,
And commune now as then !

THE NEST

SEE how the sunset like a bird

In the elm-tree leans his burning breast !

Ah ! once in arms as little stirred,

I too, I too had rest !

Thou droppest down, thou happy light,

Each evening to thy nest again,

But I, another has my right,

And lies where I have lain.

SONG

WHEN the fair day is fairest
Oh, do thou then beware !
For deep as deep thou carest
Shall be thy fall from there
In an hour when thou preparest
To bask in that fine air.

Be not thyself ! yea, dearly
As thou dost love, be strong !
Shew not thy heart too clearly !
Plead not of hers too long !
Then weep to know how nearly
Thou'dst learned another song !

LAC SOURIS

BONNY Bird, bonny Bird,

Whither hides thy pleasure ?

Never lake a summons heard

Of so wild a measure.

Softer than the light through leaves

When thy song is fiercest,

Ah, but sharp as autumn eves

Now the hills thou piercest !

And the memory-dreading deeps,

Where at last unspeaking,

One within my bosom sleeps

Wearied out with seeking.

Bonny Bird, bonny Bird,

As thou lov'st give over !

Twice may that proud hope be stirred,

Never twice recover !

A CHOICE

SING on, dear Bird—oh, carol still

Though all that bids your tongue rejoice—
A world beyond the flaming hill—

Be nothing to you but a voice !
Sing on ! till joy have quite forgot
You sing it, but you know it not !

And I—remembering all too well—

That loved where merry days caress,
And worshipped where the pure airs dwell

Around the soul of quietness—
The gladdest hope that earth could bring
I knew—and now I cannot sing !

A SONG CHANGED

A ROBIN sang at eve

A song the days forget ;

It gave me then such pleasure !

It gives me now regret !

Regret for songs that leave

The scope that made them great,

And in the heavenly measure

No more participate ;

Nor ever can retrieve

Their marriage with the light,

That once about their treasure

Seemed, ah, how infinite !

WOMAN

AND first the blowing tuft you snatch
And then the darting gleam,
And then you know she cannot match
The woman of your dream.

But oh, beyond her holy ground,
How otherwise your pain !
It is the flash, the waft, the sound
You shall not match again !

ARTEMIS

WAIT, Impatiently Beautiful !

Rainbow out of the storm !

Between the west wind weariless,

And the south wind warm !

We would speak to thy speeding

Light, would worship thy face ;

O woman of women, would pray thee

Ponder a space !

How could the world imprison thee ?

Lo, thou quick of it all,

'Tis thine own pulse thou answerest,

Thine is the call !

O too needlessly fugitive !

O too scornfully great !

Hear, O woman magnanimous !

Hear thou and wait !

A FOOL

COME, clasp me by the hand, my friend !

Approve what I have done !

Ah yes, though all is at an end !

Ah yes, though now there's none,

There's none in all the lonely place

Ever to understand—

Save you, the fool that wears my face,

The dolt that wields my hand.

O YOU BY PRAYER, BY PRAISE

O you by prayer, by praise,

Made so impossible !

Sweet days !

Whom heart and hearthside garnished through,

And long years starved for none but you,

Prevent to come and dwell !

O you too timorous joy

To sound the world's brave test !

Poor toy !

Whom reverence by its trusting chills,

Whom faith by its demanding kills,

My lost, because my best !

Love too supremely tender !

Peace too divinely far !

Hot splendour !

Speechless communion !—O my sweet,

With what a soulless, shoreless beat

My sea foregoes thy star !

SMOKE

COME, light an incense in the grove,

Tobacco sweet and fine !

And you shall ponder on your love,

And I will muse on mine.

And you will say—How bright, how clear

The leaves are overhead !—

But you will think—another year

And then my darling's dead.

And all my holding will not keep

My darling by my side

When death would marry her, and heap

His roses on his bride.

Then I—The summer never shone

So proud on Oka hill.—

But, in my heart—A year ago

She loved me to my fill.

And under branches brighter far,

Her head upon my breast,

We watched the Sparhawk like a star

Seek heaven for his nest.

But ah, my spirit never had

The clasp my arms have known !

And now she calls another lad

Her darling and her own.

Come, light an incense in the grove,

And raise it to the shrine !

Like smoke to-morrow takes your love

As yesterday took mine.

THE KINGDOM

I SOUGHT thee up the mountain side,

My joy, remembered there !

But lo, I missed thee in my pride—

Thou wert too simply fair !

Thy motion was the sudden breeze

From strawberries and clover ;

Thy look was as the light through trees

That sway, and then close over.

Thy token was a timid glance,

Oh, then, how blind the scorn

That sought beyond thy flashed advance !

For still I seek and mourn !

THE BOATMAN

'Twas once as I was walking
By rivers deep and wide,
There came a boatman asking
To row me o'er the tide.
A blither, bonnier boatman
Might never else be seen ;
His hair was bound with azure,
His shirt with gold and green.

But lo, as we were oaring
With songs for our delight,
A piteous thing befell me—
The shore sank clean from sight !

O the goodly hills around us,

And all the pleasant lea !

And we were left a-faring

With never a land to see.

And lo, as we were oaring

Upon a trackless tide,

All on the bench before me

The boatman dropped and died !

O the sunny bird sang sweetly

At morn, and all was fair !

But when shall I find a land again,

Or one to lead me there ?

ON A POET TURNED PHILOSOPHER

WHITHER has our Merlin gone—

He that gave us lyric measures,

Joyful songs and hymns anon—

Glorious hymns of godlike pleasures ?

Ah, bewail the traitor morn !

In the forest once He stood

Where deep whisperings were borne

From the vales of scented wood.

On a floor of piléd moss

Down He sank and long He lay,

Choric spirits wove across

Visions of a subtler day.

And a ghostly sense began

Lighting eyes he never knew.

Last of all came Vivian

And beguiled him through and through.

Blowing softly, flashing white,

All the life within the world

Labouring through love and light

Unto wisdom she unfurled.

Wound him there beyond release,

Silent in her silken skein,

One with all the coming peace

One with all the present pain.

All his measures did she bind,

All his songs of joy cast out,

(Art must be a little blind

Music has its dawn in doubt).

To express her truth how fair

Daintiest words were all too rough,

For his heart entrancéd there

Far beyond this mortal stuff.

Ah, but we that walk the glen,

Far too weary for that light,

Plainer toilers, humbler men

Seeking 'twixt our night and night

Only, for the little hour,

Solace in such songs as thine,

Now we pass the webbéd bower

Sombre as yon crooning pine.

Ah, bewail the traitor morn !

Ah, the immortal sad caress !

Silent are our ways, forlorn

All the paths He loved to bless.

And forever where the maid

Harps the wind within the bough,

Strokes the harp that once He played,

He can sing no longer now.

THE QUEST

O GATHER thy heart together, my steed !

Gather and haste and away !

For verily Christ our Lord hath need

Of thee and me this day !

Not to slink in a lone morass,

Not to hush as we run ;

But to shout to a throbbing world and pass

In the blessed blaze of the sun.

Thinking scorn of a creedless work !

Scorn of a workless creed !

Scorn of the thousand follies that shirk

A road and a single steed !

For shame it is on Christian ground

So many heathens fare !

And the sorriest Christian might be found

Worthy if he would swear

Never to play an earthly part

Until he could flaunt unfurled

The goodly soul of it, flash its heart

Of eternity unto the world.

Yea, well for him ! With a triple life

His being shall stand restored ;

To drink in the very wind of strife,

The wine of the breath of the Lord.

To see His Face in a doubting land,

His Eye in a flashing levin ;

To grasp with an ardent, manly hand

His hand down-stretchéd from heaven.

O God be thanked ! There's never a curse

But chaos ! away ! away !

For naught but the very universe

Shall be my church this day !

THE PROPHET

From Pushkin

ATHIRST for the spirit, unblest, ungraced,
I was trudging the bitter waste,
When there where sudden the road went blind,
Lo, a six-winged seraph shined !
Light as a dream he touched mine eyes :—

As an eagle stares
When the new sun glares,
I was wise.

Then were his fingers on mine ears ;
And I heard heaven's wars,
And the pulse of the stars,
And the flight of angels round the spheres.
Nay but the creeping things in the sea,

The vine in the valley, were loud for me.

And the tongue of my sin he caught,

The lying tongue he tare ;

And his sharp fingers terribly wrought

A fang of wisdom there.

He clove my breast with a sword.

My trembling heart

He pierced apart

With a coal, a flaming thought of the Lord.

There in the desert I, as dead.

But the voice of the Lord cried out and said :—

Arise, my Seer, my new creation !

My will

Shall be thy fill !

Thy torch, mine inspiration !

And the hearts of men thy conflagration !

ALIENS

Not all have Earth for mother, visitors
Are some to be for all our natural days
For whom her smiles proclaim instinctive wars
And hiding of her wisdom and her ways.
Her lovely passions, though the spirit aches
It cannot enter. Nay but doubly deep
The imperious capture of an instant makes
Our sorrow for the joy we cannot keep !
Therefore with visions we confirm the offence
Of our strange blood, and, with an alien
prayer,
Seek beauty far beyond her fringe of sense,
And losing this, yet find no solace there.
O twofold world, to neither we belong !
Having no temple here, and there no song !

SHEPHERDS

MUCH swayest thou me, but sometimes thou
art swayed ;

And my meek service finds its utterance
bold,

And thou art young and I am very old.

Yet as I speak I wonder :—gentle maid,

How long will joy thus leave me unafraid

To lead thy spirit ? Common path and fold

Alike we have ; but thou the staff shouldst
hold,

Dear Shepherdess, and be by me obeyed.

Or let us twain together, both like sheep

Heed but one constant Voice ! for I have
heard

His loving call by every hedge, His word
In every vale. Forever let him keep
Our homeward paths before us till we sleep !
And let us by no other power be stirred !

A CALM

GRIEF has a thousand tongues, but joy has
none !

A thousand waves of sorrow match the wind
Of bitter darkness with a stir as blind.

But joy becalms his waters like the sun,

The substance of their mood too greatly one

To break the sovereign glory that has shined

And that in none but quiet hearts can find

A depth to spend its healing warmth upon.

So, in these days thine eyes so greatly bless,

My froth of words is sunk in deepness mute,

The silent mirror of thy loneliness.

But should some far o'erwinging doubt
dispute

That for that silence I do love thee less,

My whole soul's tempest would that wind
confute !

THE BIRTH-STAR

SHE walked among those human ways

Like memories of diviner days

And deeper dreams than ours.

And then was I in heaven set

To be her guardian amulet

And strow her path with flowers.

It was so sweet to care, and oh,

I watched her and I loved her so !

But when her heart was ta'en and she

Became a wedded mystery,

O Life ! how deeper far

Than any angel's love might be

Was thine, O Mother, when for me

Not heaven, nor height, nor star

Was longer glorious, only rest

Within thine arms, upon thy breast.

IN ARMOUR

O you, the proud, all you that are not loved,
Nor ever will be as ye will to be !
Whose life goes always habited and gloved,
And never naked, hand to hand, and free !
Who never enter, soul and body one,
In joys that can alone make earth our home !
Or, if ye did, your sojourning is done,
Fierce virgins now forever must ye roam !
Blighting the good by memory of the best,
Yet most in memory hot, insensate, mad !
Demanding, yet despising, to be blest,
Too loyal to the truth ye never had !
O halt awhile, and, in your want, rejoice !
The Voice impels you, ye compel the Voice !

SAVONAROLA

How like the red sun to a steely sky

Savonarola into Florence came !

How like an anvil she, upon whose fame

He by his heart, God's hammer, by and by

Was banged and built to glory ! Florence, on
high

Thou sat'st, high look'dst, high hop'dst, but
in his name

The first curse caught thee ! that, by
eloquent flame

Being eclipsed, made fire by fire to die.

He, like a bell that's clapt herself in twain,

Gulpt out her heart in her heart's ecstasy,

And burst herself by music to be mute,

Pealed into heaven. He was that Christful
grain

Strowed here for chaff, but in eternity

Reaped by Lord God an incorruptible
fruit.

THE BIRTH OF THE GODS

It is too grave for passion : the frail sense
Is lost amid those molten vapours, past
All mortal brinks beholding, and the last
Exorbitant gleam. These pauses are the tense
Of a diviner, vaster opulence

Demanding peace, that so the light might cast
All life into one utterance,—too vast
And too divine for spirits still too dense.

Yet once of old that cloudy magic bare
The first bright gods upon the startled range
Of earth : and now upon me from that air
I know there steals a spirit rich and strange.
New gods, new fates those fiery shrines prepare,
And prophesy inevitable change.

THE FIRST EVENING

O MARVELLOUS evening ! when that voice of
grace—

Long known, yet how unknown before !—
how sweet

And calm with summer !—softly called to
greet

My passing step ! Oh, with how strange a face,
Scarce knowing mine own name, I crossed the
space

Between us two ! With what bewildered
feet

My soul arose and left its native seat
And walked and wondered in an alien place !

A place of flowers, too exquisitely calm !

Yet scents whose very mystery was a sign !

A garden, where the moon's most secret balm

Explored the inmost pathway serpentine !

Woke the last shadow ! yet so soothed its
qualm,

Almost I knew that blessed ground was mine!

THE HEARTH

THE last log brooding on a flame too deep,
Too grave for action, spark or turbulence,
How well it fits a feeling too intense
To break its heat in action ! 'Tis no sleep
Nor dullness in the heart that makes it keep
So silent ; but the happy thoughts, the sense
Of all that soon may chill them far from hence
Choke utterly the soul in which they steep.

Oh think but of the measure that I owe,
Conceive then all the weighted thankfulness
That so much welcome, gentle as the dream
Of the lost summer, soothing as the gleam
Of the last hearth-fire, should indeed express,
And what I feel, if not you hear, you know !

THE LAST EVENING

ACCEPT the last ! a last there has to be !

And though you should defer it week by
week,

Still shall it come and turn a pensive
cheek

Toward you till you cannot choose but see.

Then must you go ; and though by hedge and
tree

And heaven-remembered hill you turn and
seek

Yet one more gleam, there lifts at last a
peak

That hides it and debars you utterly.

But oh that Time should be so fixed and sure,

Yet past that Time the spirit must endure

To be swept on despite its whole endeavour !

Amazing Time ! that in the soul alone

Hath any life, yet deeper than a stone

Can sink therein to be repeated never !

THE MERMAID

I KNOW a mermaid, tall and slow.
All other maidens laugh and go
Splashing from surf to surf, but she
Has serious secrets with the sea.

A ritual draws her clinging stride
Past where the spotted sea-weeds glide ;
Nameless and smooth and lithe as they
She dives upon her southward way.

Ah ! there, where jewelled spindrift flies,
The instant hoary castles rise
To perish ere they half begin
Imprisoning sweet music in !

There shall she find where she belongs,
And to her breast those faery songs
Shall gather, and returning bear
A joy no son of man may share.

Furtive and free shall she lie down
And through her unbound tresses frown
On all that seek her, ere she part
Uncaught of eyes, untamed of heart.

THE WINTER MOON

OH, rise or sink ! orb thou at thine own hours,
Moon of the South ! a light no more to me
Till the cold year like thy declining be
Buried at last, and those too distant powers
Summon the spring-time to a warmth of
flowers

In the sole garden I desire to see
In the sole nights when I may walk by thee
To my one peace, now locked in wintry towers.

Towers of convention, barriers of men's
thought,

And all that freedom since the world began

Has cried at from the passionate deeps of
man :

Hours that no plot with thy most moving
beam

Can lead to quiet converse, or the theme
Nature so surely in her silence taught !

TELL ME, O WOMAN!

TELL me, O Woman, when I drop my hand,
Seeing the whole world rigid, answerless,
Impenetrable,—tell me, when I press
Once more to battles that I never planned
And strategies I cannot understand,
For which the blush and happy pulse that
bless
Our nobler days are dried to nothingness—
A war of skeletons in an iron land !—
Tell me, O Woman, tell me as thou must,
O Woman's heart, that only dust is dust !
And that the incessant spirit hath a might
That cannot sink, let but that truth be heard !
That life is its own prophecy of light !
Speak, O thou Woman ! bless me with that word !

WHERE IS THAT HEART ?

WHERE is that Heart, more natural, more deep
Than Nature, unto whose immenser shade
My burning spirit stumbles in the glade
Athwart the sunset, groping up the steep ?
That haunting heart, the peace of all my sleep,
Pulse of my waking, yet forever stayed
Unfelt, unseen ! that life, that soul, that maid
Who could my whole confession take and keep ?

Still is she hidden, and the shadows long
As the black secret of this impotent world
Melt only into darkness, more apart
From all that could appease me, to my
heart

That cloudy crimson secret still uncurled
And I dismissed with only half my song !

OWNERSHIP

Look down on me and laugh, you thirty hills !
That from the lifting of this cedarn height
Shew your dark interlacings round the white
Of stairry lakes, by interrupted sills
Climbing to glass your spruces : all that fills
Your ridges after ridges, all the might
Of shadow on shadow stretched into the light
And amber eve, to the last pine that chills
In heaven, all is mine for counted gold,
And from those pools mine the sole right to
quaff,
Those pines to cut ; and yet if I should keep
A thousand years my fee, and you withhold
Your heart as now, as now I still could weep
To be so poor.—Look down on me and laugh !

THE GARDEN

I SAW your pictures, part of former joys
I shared not in, a world that in your mind
Like a dim garden, seen of eyes half blind
By nearer light, afar from nearer noise,
Yet sweetens all. No present care destroys
The scent of it, its peace deserts you never ;
But in its pathways you may walk and sever
All turmoil from the heaven of your poise.

Ah, that I too could in that garden walk !
And there be pensive with the gardener !
And pluck the haunting spirit from a stalk
That shakes the soul with magic ! Oh, with
her
To plant still happier bulbs therein, and talk
Of unborn days, and lights yet holier !

TO A SONG-SPARROW

O BIRD of the Spring,
First voice of the hill,
Sing all through the forest,
I'll follow thee still !
I have wandered afar,
I have waited too long ;
Oh, shew me the home
Where thy secrets belong !

I am sick of the turmoil,
The bands that involve me !
O Singer, the world
In thy freedom dissolve me !

From the warfare of ages,

The wastage of men,

O Bird of my youth,

Now release me again !

For once more I ponder

By each bud and bramble

That coaxed me alone

And of olden to ramble

To where by the bushes,

Unbreathing, unstirred,

I paused to thy piping,

Thou exquisite bird !

O bird of my youth,

It was here in this place

Thy music first troubled

The joy in my face !

And I left thee in doubts

That I never forget ;

But, O Bird of the morning,

I follow thee yet !

In the dusk of my seeking

The sun where thou shinest,

Though never I reach it,

To me is divinest.

In the heart of my passion

I wait for thy peace :

Oh, when will the thorns

Of this wandering cease ?

Oh, could I but rest

In the wisdom thou bringest,

Oh, could I but share

In the joy that thou singest,

Oh, could I but enter

The fields of thy truth,

How blest were this morning,

O Bird of my youth !

O pipe of the Spring !

First voice of the hill !

Sing all through the forest,

I'll follow thee still !

Oh, when will the hurt

Of thy music be past ?

Oh, lead me, oh, shew me

Thy secrets at last !

THE PINE

BODY, when I leap from thee
May thy bones become a tree—
A pine upon the north defying
All the flying eastern sea !

He shall come like conquerors
Foaming in uproarious wars,
When he shouts thy head shall toss
And he shall shatter on thy shores.

Thou shalt rear thy strenuous life
Out of action, out of strife :
On the assaulting winds thy pæons
Shalt thou pipe as on a fife.

When the sun down-shimmereth
Change, O change his fire to breath !

Drink the surge, and brew the wassail
Out of all the stones of death.

I shall make my memory thine,
Yea, visit thee with such a sign
They that see shall know for ever
The meaning in thy boughs, O Pine !

PAGANS IN THE NORTH

MERRILY dances the Loon in his waters,
Merrily dance his two dark daughters :
And O that my Spirit and I could dissever !
And I could dance with you for ever and ever !

Dreamily cries the Loon to his waters,
Dreamily cry his two dark daughters :
And O that my Spirit and I could dissever !
And I could cry with you for ever and ever !

Loftily soars the Loon o'er his waters,
Loftily soar his two bright daughters :
And O that my Spirit and I could dissever !
And I could soar with you for ever and ever !

WITHIN AND WITHOUT

I KNOW a valley begirt

With shadow and silver of night ;

I know a level alert

With dewy webs moon-bright,

That steeps in the cup of the hills

Whose pine-tops ponder afar

The birth of indolent rills

And the green of the ancient star ;

Where nothing labours alone,

But each of his travail tells,

The star to the trickling stone,

And the stooping fir to the wells.

And the lilac-throated moon

Leans over and holds them all . . .

And only the tremulous loon

From a lake they never recall

Never an answer awakes,

But only stirs in my heart

A cry as far as his lakes,

As alone, unharboured, apart !

THE WINDS

O HAST thou beheld them,

Marchers on mountains ?

Hast thou beheld

The rushing grey grasses, the gold-scudding
courses ?

They toss like the manes of glorious horses !

O the winds are wild horses, unbitted, un-
quelled !

Strong be their hoofs in the wheat and the corn !

O splendidly neigh they

In forests at morn !

Hast thou beheld them,

Brown in the caverns,

And bright on the sea ?

With white-frothing breakers and masterful
shocks

They harry the shaggy great sides of the rocks.

O Lord, how mightily work they for Thee !

Thy weariless children, Thy passionate
shouters !

But as for ourselves,

We are nothing but doubters !

THE WANDERERS

O COME, you lovely wanderers,
Too long from earth apart !
You lavishers, you squanderers,
You revellers of heart !
We are wearied out with knowing,
With doing quite undone,
O come and set us flowing,
You children of the Sun !

The forests are not lonely,
The winds do never wait,
Of all God's people only
We men are separate.

You spirits of love, surround us,
But oh, too fugitive
We let our own souls bound us
And will not dare to live.

We dread that love be spoken,
We keep our souls unshared,
Lest friendship should be broken
To hear its truth declared.
Our wisdom walks no whither,
Our work builds nothing sure
But that our own selves wither
While steel and stone endure.

O haunt us with your measures,
O, past escape draw near,
Till here the Godlike pleasures,
The happy vales are here ;

Where all the spendthrift lovers

Wake up the laughing dreams

And every look recovers

The old immortal streams !

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